



2005

# Legislative Survey

For the 21st District

**Senator Paull Shin**

**Fall 2005**



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Vice Chair; Early Learning,  
K-12 & Higher Education

Dear Neighbors,

Washington's economy has really picked up speed over the past couple of years. Our unemployment rate, once among the highest in the nation, is now down significantly. Thousands of Washington workers have found jobs and family incomes are on the rise.

But many people are still unemployed or under-employed, and family budgets are stretched thin as the cost of goods and services continues to rise. As chair of the Senate International Trade & Economic Development Committee, I am a leader in our state's effort to increase job growth and improve the economy. I strongly believe that we can counter the trend of outsourcing in part by attracting additional investment to our state. I want to build on some of our recent successes so that a rising tide lifts all boats. I will continue my work to help Washington businesses create more jobs and to ensure that everyone who needs a job has the skills to find one.

I am very proud of the work the Legislature accomplished this year. We adopted significant election reforms, boosted funding for educational opportunities with high standards for students, expanded performance audits of state government, created a new citizens' oil spill advisory council, adopted stricter emissions standards for cars and finally approved legislation to require insurance companies to reimburse mental health treatment on par with other physical diseases. I am confident we can build on those successes in 2006.

The Legislature must still adopt an earlier date for our primary election. With only seven weeks between the primary and the general elections, we leave too little time for the mailing of ballots to overseas military personnel and potential recounts of primary ballots. We must add this reform to the positive election reform legislation already adopted.

The Legislature will also be investigating strategies that will make it possible for more small businesses to provide health care benefits to their employees. I am concerned that a top-down mandate by the state would be too costly and meet with widespread opposition. Instead, legislators and Gov. Christine Gregoire are discussing proposals for tax incentives or other methods that could help many small employers offer these critical benefits for the first time.

As always, thank you for the honor of serving as your state senator. Please feel free to fill out the survey inside. Your responses will be very helpful to me during the coming legislative session.

Sincerely,

Sen. Paull Shin

# Opinion Survey

Please help me serve you better during the next legislative session by sharing your opinions on the biggest issues of the day. I appreciate your feedback and support.



## Moving Forward with Transportation Improvements

Now that I-912 was defeated at the polls, hundreds of planned transportation projects around the state can move forward. I voted for the transportation package last spring because it funded

\$65 million in transportation improvements in our area, including interchange improvements along I-5, a Sounder station in Mukilteo and proven transit solutions that take cars off the highways. Dozens of bridges in our area and across the state will receive seismic retrofitting and voters recognized the importance of critical public safety improvements at Snoqualmie Pass, the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the 520 floating bridge.

In addition to all the transportation improvements, I believed it was mandatory that the Legislature build into the package the most strict accountability measures in the history of the Department of Transportation. I look forward to the first round of independent performance audits that will continually gauge whether projects are on time and on budget. Our taxpayers demand and deserve to know that their gas tax dollars are being spent wisely.

**Keeping in mind that adequate transportation funding has been a constant struggle, are there other strategies you would support to improve congestion in our area? What's your vision of the future of transportation in the central Puget Sound region?**

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## Preparing for Disasters

Unlike Hurricane Katrina, our most feared natural disaster, a major earthquake under Puget Sound will give us little or no advance warning. A recent Washington Emergency Management survey predicted that a 6.9 magnitude quake on the Seattle fault could kill as many as 1,600 people and cause \$33 billion in property damage. As a major American gateway to Asia, we may be one of the first communities struck by avian flu or another serious communicable disease.



Photo courtesy of City of Olympia, Washington

Legislators have conducted a series of hearings around the state to assess our readiness and direct the efforts of our primary response agencies. This coming session we will continue to review our current state laws and existing

emergency preparedness system to ensure we're ready when a large disaster occurs.

**What's your level of confidence that local, state and federal officials are prepared to deal with these kinds of disasters? What more do you believe the state should be doing to improve coordination among all levels of government?**

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## Educating our Children

The Legislature adopted a very strong education budget last year, and we did it without a general tax hike. We increased the number of student admissions to our state universities, boosted the K-12 school construction budget, decreased class sizes and improved compensation for teachers.

As a lifelong educator, I am proud of these investments. Higher education is the pivotal key to prospering in today's economy. But our limited state resources require us to focus on where we can do the

most good. A comprehensive review of our education system and funding mechanisms is under way, and I look forward to the results.



**In the meantime, what are your funding priorities for the education of our state’s students? If additional resources are available, should we invest more in basic education, expanded admissions to state universities, additional enrichment programs and extracurricular activities, full-time kindergarten, smaller class sizes or better compensation for teachers?**

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**The WASL and the Class of 2008**

This coming spring, the 10th grade that takes the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) will be the first class required to pass that exam — or a new alternative exam — in order to graduate from high school.

**Should there be a minimum level of knowledge a high school student must have to graduate? Do you support the current WASL requirement and timeline, if the state provides the extra help that some students may need to pass the exam? Or do you believe the WASL should only be a yardstick to measure our schools’ ability to educate our children?**

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**Jobs and the Economy**

In addition to my work as an educator, I am proud to be a small business owner. I am acutely aware that government itself cannot create jobs, but can do much to create the environment that allows businesses to flourish and create jobs. For decades, I have been a leader in the fight to expand our state’s exports overseas and attract international investment and tourism in Washington.

This past session, I fought for legislation that initiated a review of state contracts that are outsourced to overseas companies. This task force, which



includes business, labor and government leaders, is examining what types of contracts are outsourced and why. I believe that if U.S. workers and businesses can provide these services to the state, we should be supporting our economy here at home.

**What are your ideas for improving Washington’s economy and creating more family-wage jobs? Are you concerned as I am about the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs to other nations?**

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**What else is on your mind?**

Feel free to share your thoughts on any of the other issues the Legislature might be working on this coming year.

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Share your  
thoughts with  
me as I prepare  
for the 2006  
legislative  
session.

Opinion Survey



INSIDE!



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